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ABSTRACT

The employment and educational status of a sample of University of Maryland's bachelor's degree graduates was surveyed in 1983, as were their attitudes and career needs. Responses from 346 graduates indicated that males were more likely to be employed in their chosen field or in a satisfactory position than were women. Women were more likely to be employed, but still in the process of seeking a job within their field. Males were more likely to have entered occupations in engineering and mathematics (39 percent males, 8 percent females), while females were more likely to be in education (15 versus 3 percent), the social sciences (8 versus 2 percent), or clerical/professional sales (15 versus 3 percent). Although men and women were equally likely to hold jobs in management or business, men were more likely to have been hired by large corporations. The mean annual salary for males was \$18,220, compared to \$12,798 for females. For post-graduation adjustments, men were more likely to have difficulty in financial planning and translating theory to practice, while women were more concerned with adjusting to a new schedule and feeling like a beginner again. Women were more likely to wish they had taken a more practical, career-oriented major, and were more likely to desire career assistance than were men. (Author/SW)

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SEVEN MONTHS LATER

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SUMMARY

A random sample of five hundred 1983 UMCP bachelor's degree graduates were sent an anonymous questionnaire on their current employment and educational status, satisfaction and career needs. Three Hundred and forty-six (75%) responded after followups by mail and phone. Males were more likely to be employed in their chosen field or in a satisfactory position (61% vs. 55%). Women were more likely to be employed, but still in the process of seeking a job within their field (20% women; 14% men). Males were more likely to have entered occupations in engineering and mathematics (39% males, 8% females), while females were more likely to be in education (15% vs. 3%), social sciences (8% vs. 2%), or clerical/professional sales (15% vs. 3%). Although men and women were equally likely to hold jobs in management or business (16%), men were more likely to have been hired by large corporations (40% vs. 24%). The mean annual salary for males was \$18,220, and for females it was \$12,798. This salary gap of \$5422 was larger than that reported by Knight, Sedlacek and Bachhuber (1983) for 1979 graduates of UMCP. For post graduation adjustments, men were more likely to have difficulty in financial planning and translating theory to practice, while women were more concerned with adjusting to a new schedule and feeling like a beginner again. Women were more likely to wish they had taken a more practical, career-oriented major, and were more likely to desire career assistance than were men. Other results and implications are discussed.

There are critical transitions in adult development that set patterns for the future. The entry into the work force is one such transition, and for many that entry is tied to graduation from college. The career opportunities one finds upon graduation can play an important role in determining one's path to success and job satisfaction.

For women, career opportunities and compensation have historically been less than that of men. Inequalities have been found in salary (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1984; Schreiner, 1984; Totenberg, 1984), access to occupations (Halaby, 1979; Sell & Johnson, 1979) and advancement within occupations (Brophy, 1984; Totenberg, 1984). In addition, women may be self-selecting themselves out from higher paying jobs because they do not aspire to them, according to Gottfredson (1978).

In a survey of college graduates of 1979, Knight, Sedlacek, and Bachhuber (1983) also found lower salaries for women and found that most women entered traditionally female occupations. In addition, compared to men, women were less likely to regret not taking a job-oriented academic curriculum (one that might lead to a higher paying job). These findings were interpreted as related to the process of sex-role socialization. The authors went on to suggest ways in which student affairs personnel and career counselors could assist women by acknowledging sex-role issues.

Given that those suggestions were made earlier in the literature by Fitzgerald and Crites (1979), the question then becomes: Have women changed in recent years? Mason-Sowell and Sedlacek (1984) suggest that women college students are increasingly viewing college as a means of career preparation and not solely for intellectual pursuit. In this sense, women have become more like their male counterparts than ever before.

What is the situation of the current college graduate? If there are indeed rising expectations among women for career equity, are these expectations

being met in the marketplace? Are women as satisfied with their jobs after graduation as they have been in the past? How do males and females compare in 1983? The present research was conducted in an effort to examine these questions and thus provide an update of the Knight, Sedlacek, and Bachhuber study.

Method

A random sample of 500 of the 2998 graduates who received bachelor's degrees from the University of Maryland at College Park in May 1983, were sent an anonymous questionnaire on their current employment and educational status, satisfaction, and career needs. Follow-up procedures yielded 346 (51% male; 49% female) usable instruments (75% return rate) covering a period seven months after graduation. The full sample was compared in the areas of education, satisfaction, and career planning. Only employed graduates (n=296) were compared on employment issues. Equal proportions of male and females (80%) were employed full time.

Data were analyzed using percentages, chi-square, and multivariate analysis of variance. All differences reported were significant at the .05 level.

Results

There were significant differences between males and female in their descriptions of their present situations, the occupational field they entered, the types of organizations in which they were employed, salary, the types of adjustments they found difficult after graduation, and in their current career planning needs. These differences conform to past findings on the status of women.

Employment Issues

In describing their present situations, males were more likely to be employed in their chosen field or in a satisfactory position (61% males compared to 55% females). More women were likely to be employed but still in the process of seeking a job within their field (20% of the women vs. 14% of the men). As

might be expected, males were more likely to enter occupations in the male-dominated fields of engineering and mathematics (39% males vs. 8% females). Females were significantly more likely to hold jobs in education, the social sciences, and clerical fields (see Table 1). The high proportion of women in clerical jobs may account for the high proportion of women who indicated that although employed, they were still seeking work in their field. Interestingly, although men and women equally indicated that they held jobs in management and/or business administration, men were significantly more likely to have been hired by large corporations (40% males vs. 24% females). As noted by Knight and her colleagues regarding 1979 graduates, female graduates of 1983 were also more likely to be employed in "non-business" settings such as educational institutions, the federal government, and community service organizations.

The difference in annual salary reported by each sex also followed the usual pattern. Males earned significantly more than females. The mean annual salary for males was \$18,220 and for females was \$12,798.

Post-Graduation Adjustment

In making the transition from student to other adult roles after college, males and females found challenges in different areas. When asked to choose their most difficult adjustment after graduation, males were significantly more likely to have difficulty in the areas of financial planning, translating their theoretical learnings to practical job performance, and in learning office politics. Women, on the other hand, were more likely to have problems with adjusting to a new schedule (perhaps with less flexible hours), and with feeling like a beginner again.

Educational Satisfaction and Career Planning

Overall, both male and female graduates were satisfied with their present situations, their jobs, and the college education they received. These

attitudes were assessed by Likert items, using a 5-point scale where 1=strongly agree and 5=strongly disagree. Males, however, were significantly more likely than females to agree with the item "If I had it to do over again, I would take the same or a similar major" (means=2.08 and 2.51, respectively). Females were more likely than males to indicate that they wished they had taken a more practical job-oriented major (means=3.31 and 3.87, respectively). Thus, in 1983, females regretted not being more job-oriented, although this was not so in 1979 at the same university (Knight, Sedlacek, & Bachhuber, 1983). This may serve to confirm Mason-Sowell and Sedlacek's (1984) finding that women on campus are more vocationally oriented than ever before.

Female graduates were more likely to desire career assistance than were males. Females were significantly more likely than males to regret not seeking help in choosing a major and a career before they graduated (means=2.68 and 3.18, respectively). More women than men indicated they thought that career planning and job hunting services should have been accessible through their academic curricula (means =1.99 and 2.22, respectively), and felt that career services should be offered to alumni (means =1.76 and 1.98, respectively).

In terms of their current career needs, women alumni were somewhat behind their male counterparts developmentally. Higher proportions of female graduates were still in the stage of needing help identifying interests and skills, exploring possible careers, and exploring options (see Table 2).

Discussion

The present results indicate that in the last four years little has changed for women entering the marketplace after college. Although a recent article in USA Today (Schreiner, 1984) ballyhoos the "revolution" of women increasing their numbers in the workplace, the present study shows that women still have a way to go. The women alumni here were not as likely to be employed

in their field or in a wholly satisfying position. Even in a field where men and women entered in equal proportions : business management, women were at a disadvantage. It appears that being unable to break into the larger corporate world, women were more likely to be hired by smaller companies.

The wage gap also continues and has even widened. In 1979, for a similar group of recent alumni, the difference between the male and female mean annual salary was \$3676 (Knight, Sedlacek, & Bachhuber, 1983). In 1983, however, the gap between males and females in mean annual salary was \$5422. One can only speculate about the widening of that gap over time as women are less likely to reap the promotions that men receive (Brophy, 1984).

The question then becomes: What can be done to help women prepare for what awaits them in the workplace? Weaver (1979) suggested that women are unaware of the discrepancies between male and female salaries and occupational status, and hence report being satisfied with their employment. Women must therefore be educated about these inequalities in order for them to demand change. Since women want more career services to be offered to them, particularly through regular academic channels, programs could be undertaken to accomplish these consciousness-raising efforts in the context of their particular academic field. Perhaps when the sexism operating in the marketplace becomes less abstract and more personalized, change can begin to be realized.

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Table 1

Occupational Field by Sex*

<u>Field</u>	<u>%Males</u>	<u>%Females</u>	<u>%Total</u>
Professional, Managerial or Technical			
Architecture, Engineering or Surveying	26	6	16
Mathematical or Physical Sciences	13	2	8
Life Sciences	3	3	3
Social Sciences	2	8	5
Medicine/Health	1	3	2
Education	2	15	8
Creative Arts	5	5	5
Management/Business Administration	16	16	16
Marketing/Sales	11	15	13
Clerical/Professional Sales	3	15	9
Services	2	5	3
Protective Services	7	1	4
Agriculture, Forestry, or Fishing	3	1	2
Skilled Trades	3	0	1
Other	<u>4</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>5</u>
Total **	100%	100%	100%

*(N=292, differences significant at .05 using Chi-square)

**Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding

Table 2

Current Career Needs of Male and Female Graduates

Area of Career Need	Need Help		Do Not Need Help		Total**
	Males	Females	Males	Females	
Learning effective job hunting strategies	19%	19%	31%	31%	100%
Knowing how to find information about jobs in my field of interest	23%	26%	27%	24%	100%
Learning how to communicate effectively and be confident in job interviews	12%	14%	38%	36%	100%
Help in developing a marketable resume	11%	15%	39%	35%	100%
Exploring careers that fit my interests, skills, and values*	19%	25%	31%	25%	100%
Learning about additional specialized training in my field	25%	26%	25%	24%	100%
Exploring career options that I may not have considered*	26%	32%	24%	18%	100%
Identifying my interests and skills, and relating them to possible careers*	13%	21%	38%	29%	100%

*Differences significant at .05 level using Chi-square.

**Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding